



WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

Project ID: 2005DE56B

Title: Landowner Perceptions of the Stringency of Water Quality Regulations in Delaware

Project Type: Research

Focus Categories: Law, Institutions, and Policy, Non Point Pollution, Water Quality

Keywords: None

Start Date: 05/01/2005

End Date: 02/28/2006

Federal Funds Requested: \$1,750

Non-Federal Matching Funds Requested: \$3,500

Congressional District: At Large

Principal Investigator:

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Abstract

Surface water quality continues to be a critical problem in Delaware. Currently, 79% of Delaware's streams and rivers are unsuitable for swimming, and 80% of Delaware's year-round streams are considered moderately-to-severely damaged. Legislative initiatives, including the federal Clean Water Act and the state Nutrient Management Act, provide a rich portfolio of policies to improve Delaware's water quality. Yet, waters continue to be impaired and this leads one to wonder whether new policies are needed or whether existing policies must be reconceptualized, targeted, or simply better enforced.

This problem of policy shortcomings or inadequacies may be examined from various perspectives. Politicians, policy makers, and scientists likely appreciate the tradeoffs between acceptability and effectiveness required to generate workable policies. Yet, the public demands water quality services that may be entirely disconnected from the science. Finally, landowners supply water quality through their atomistic land-use behaviors in ways that do not necessarily correspond to the policy designs.

This project focuses on the third source of problems in water quality policy—understanding landowners' perceptions of the policy environment.